

## In This Issue

This is the fifth in a series of newsletters designed to update the community on the U.S. Route 30 Corridor Study. This newsletter presents the recommended alternatives, describes work completed since the publication of the Corridor Report in July of 2005, and outlines the next steps.

## THE U.S. ROUTE 30 CORRIDOR STUDY UPDATE

The U.S. Route 30 Corridor Study began in Spring 2003. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the feasibility of a transportation system improvement that will enhance east-west mobility while accommodating projected year 2023 travel demand within northwestern Illinois and the project area. Such an improvement has been determined to be feasible and engineering funding is now identified, so the study will proceed into the next phase: Preliminary Design/Environmental Evaluation. The project begins east of Fulton (Illinois Route 136) and extends east along U.S. Route 30 for approximately 19 miles to Interstate 88, west of Rock Falls. An expressway improvement will be the main focus of the upcoming Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Between the spring of 2003 and summer of 2005, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) gathered information on the study area, developed alternatives, analyzed those alternatives; solicited comments from the public and local officials; presented the analysis and findings to the public through meetings, newsletters, and a website; and developed a Corridor Report to document the findings. The Corridor Report was published in July 2005. Figure 1 shows the corridor alternatives (Corridor Alternative 3B, Corridor Alternative 3C, and Corridor Alternative 6) recommended for further study in the next phase.

Since the publication of the Corridor Report, two issues have been further assessed: traffic characteristics within the study area and options for the western terminus of the recommended alternatives. The results of these assessments are presented in an addendum to the Corridor Report that was published in August 2006, and are described briefly on page 2 of this newsletter.

**Funding Identified  
for the next Phase.  
Detailed Analysis to  
begin in 2007**

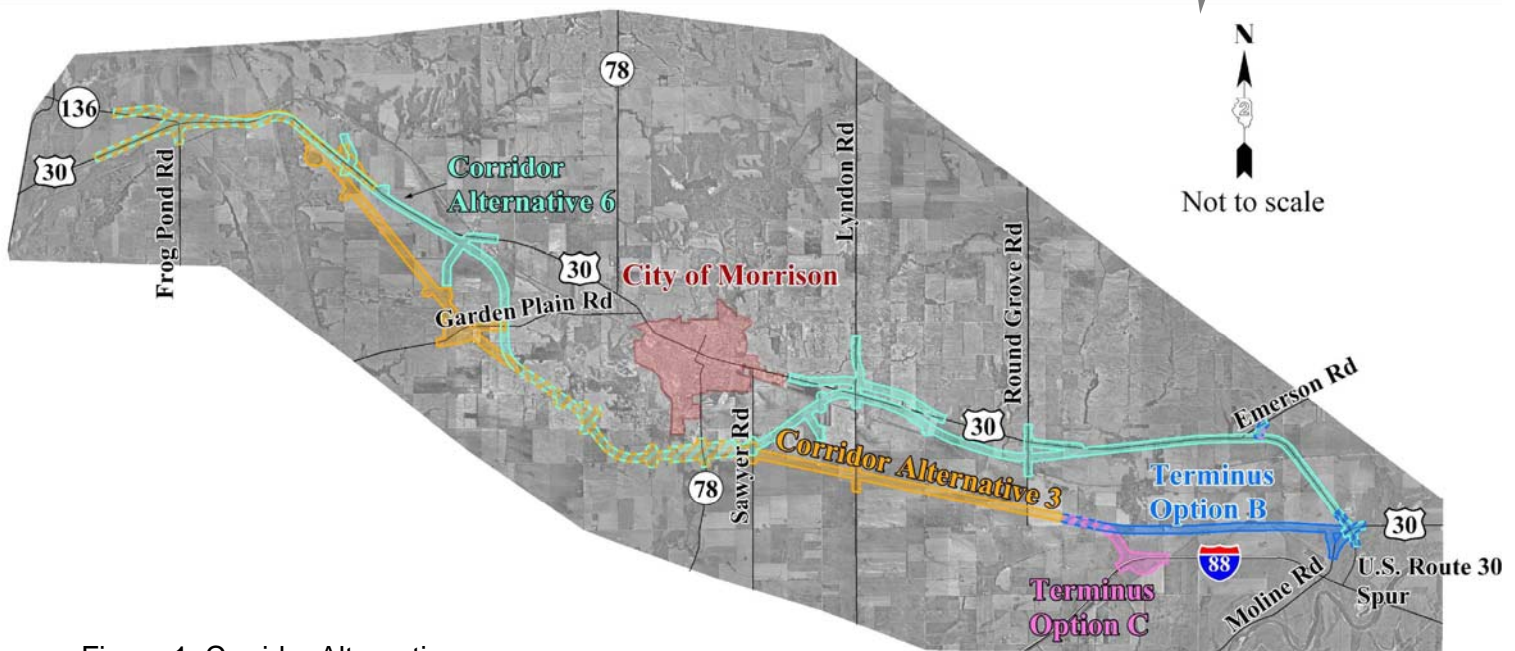


Figure 1. Corridor Alternatives Recommended for Further Study

## ADDITIONAL ANALYSES INCLUDED IN THE CORRIDOR REPORT ADDENDUM

A license plate survey was conducted in the fall of 2005 to better understand the traffic characteristics in the study area. This will be beneficial in evaluating potential vehicle use of a new U.S. Route 30 Expressway. The evaluation concluded:

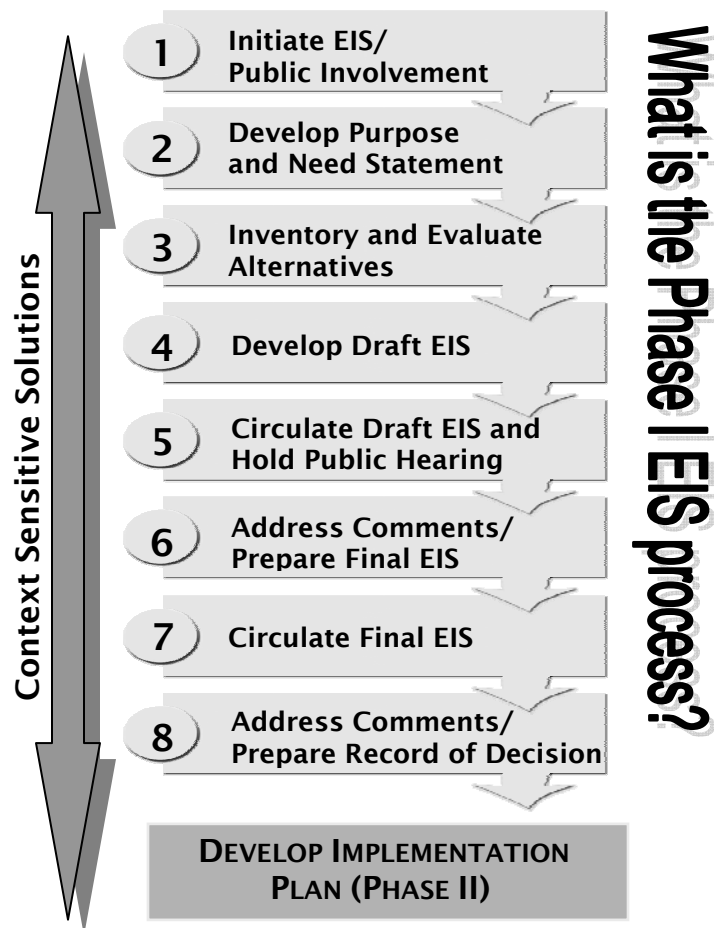
- Most traffic (including a very high percentage of trucks) would use the expressway (thus reducing the traffic on existing U.S. Route 30).
- A southern corridor alternative would attract more users than a northern corridor alternative.
- An interchange with Illinois Route 78 would be beneficial.
- The expressway limits studied in the U.S. Route 30 Corridor Study are appropriate.

An evaluation of the conceptual design of the Western Terminus was also conducted. A range of western terminus options were developed and evaluated. Some of the options were aligned north of existing U.S. Route 30 and some were aligned south. Results of the analysis concluded that there are viable design solutions that will potentially be environmentally sensitive, provide for traffic operations, and be cost effective. These options will be explored in more detail in the Phase I: Preliminary Design/Environmental Evaluation.

## PHASE I: PRELIMINARY DESIGN/ ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Phase I will be based on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). When a government agency (such as IDOT) plans to take an action that may have an effect on the human or natural environment, NEPA requires that an analysis of potential environmental effects be conducted. Within the EIS process, all identified reasonable alternatives will be evaluated and potential social, economic, and environmental impacts will be avoided or minimized. The graphic to the right shows the typical process for Phase I: Preliminary Design/Environmental Evaluation. The first three steps focus on alternatives development and evaluation; the last five steps focus on environmental analysis and documentation. Public Involvement is built into the process as dictated by NEPA. In addition, through IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) initiative, there will be opportunities for the public to get involved throughout the entire Phase I process.

The U.S. Route 30 Corridor Study was a very broad evaluation with the purpose of identifying feasible corridor locations. The Phase I process includes much more detailed analysis of traffic patterns, engineering design of alternatives, and evaluation of environmental impacts. Alignments will be refined to avoid and minimize impacts. The footprints of the corridors will be reduced from a 600-foot band width (as evaluated in the corridor study) to a narrower "right-of-way" width. Again, impacts will be avoided or minimized, and mitigation measures will be identified for all impacts that cannot be avoided.

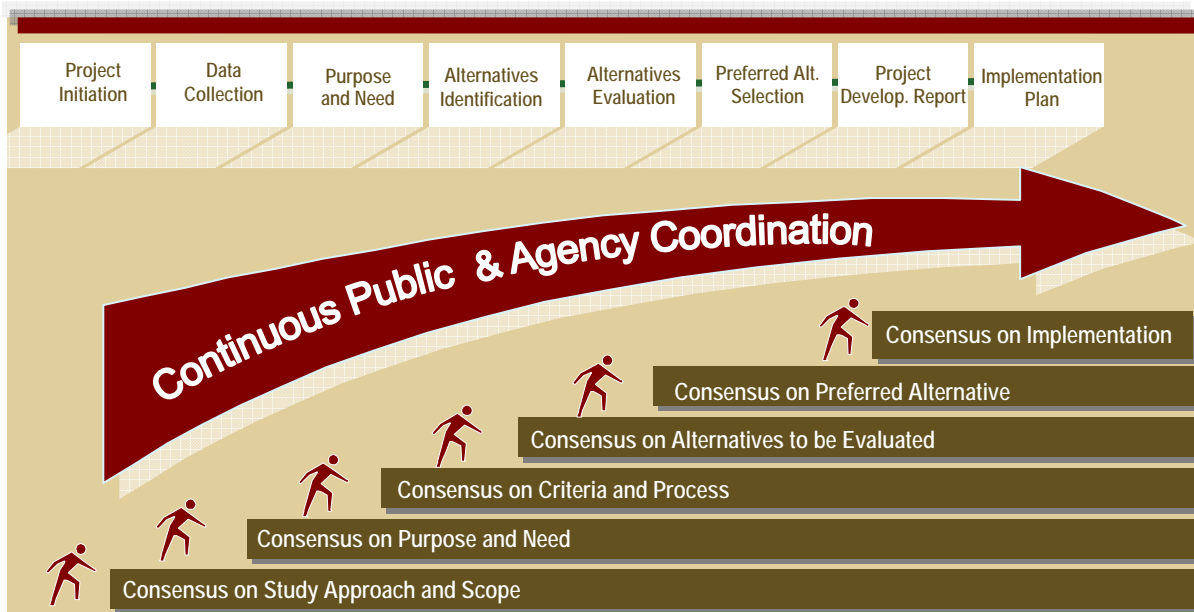


## IDOT'S CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS (CSS) PROGRAM

A Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach will be used in Phase I of the U.S. Route 30 Corridor Study to develop broad consensus on the proposed improvements. The use of CSS by IDOT was mandated by the legislature per Public Act 093-0545, which became effective January 1, 2004. IDOT defines CSS as:

*"An interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multimodal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build, and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities which fit into and reflect the project's surroundings - its 'context'."*

IDOT's CSS Program will ensure that projects adequately meet the State's transportation needs, exist in harmony with their surroundings, and add lasting value to the communities they serve. Input from local residents and business owners is an important element of the CSS program. Stakeholders are involved from Project Initiation through the Implementation Plan and Construction. Stakeholder consensus is built during each step in the process through Technical Advisory Groups, open houses, meetings with elected officials, speakers' bureaus, a website, and other communication opportunities. Continuous stakeholder involvement helps the public and agencies understand why and how decisions are made. Moreover, stakeholders are actively involved in the development and evaluation of the alternatives and have an affect on the selected alternative. In most cases this results in broader public acceptance of roadway projects as well as better-quality projects.



## WHO ARE THE US 30 STAKEHOLDERS?

- Area Residents
- Business Owners
- Road Users
- Federal Highway Administration
- Whiteside County
- Highway 30 Coalition
- Whiteside County Natural Area Guardians
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Department of Agriculture
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Blackhawk Hills Economic Development District
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Drainage Districts
- Natural Lands Institute
- City of Fulton
- City of Morrison
- City of Rock Falls
- City of Sterling
- City of Clinton, Iowa
- Village of Lyndon
- City of Prophetstown
- Village of Albany

... and others yet to be identified!



## FUNDING IDENTIFIED – PHASE I TO BEGIN IN 2007

As a result of continued project support from the Highway 30 Coalition, State and Federal legislators, local agencies, and the public, Phase I: Preliminary Design/Environmental Evaluation is now funded and is anticipated to begin in 2007. Initial steps include conducting Public Scoping Meetings and developing a Stakeholder Involvement Plan. This plan will detail all opportunities for public involvement, a very important part of Phase I for the U.S. Route 30 EIS. By virtue of being on our current project mailing list you will be kept informed as this process begins next year. If you are not currently on our mailing list, do not hesitate to contact us!

### Who to Contact for More Information?

Dawn Perkins  
IDOT, Region 2  
819 Depot Avenue  
Dixon, IL 61021-3500  
Phone: (815) 284-5948  
Fax: (815) 284-5486  
E-mail: Dawn.Perkins@illinois.gov  
Website:  
<http://www.dot.state.il.us/us30/default.html>

### Stay Informed

- ✓ Watch for releases from IDOT and local agencies, including follow-up newsletters
- ✓ Attend the scoping meetings when scheduled
- ✓ Attend Highway 30 Coalition Meetings
- ✓ Logon to the US 30 website link where the Corridor Study is published
- ✓ Write to IDOT Officials if you have comments



**Illinois Department of  
Transportation, Region 2  
819 Depot Avenue  
Dixon, IL 61021-3500**